

All Systems Go!

Are you beginning and ending the day by sounding negative mantras? "There's something wrong with me." "I can't because I'm afraid." "I'm helpless." "I'm too old."

Thoughts like these may seem fleeting and harmless, but with constant repetition they actually have a powerful impact on our self-image. In effect, what we think we are, we become.

Substituting positive self-talk, on the other hand, can be the fuel we need to rocket to the life of our dreams. Sounds simple, but it's true: Positive thoughts often can help us improve relationships, give up cigarettes, start a rewarding new career, or increase self-esteem.

Transform the universe, a thought at a time

Listen to your self-talk, especially at bedtime or before you begin your day. Do you constantly beat yourself up, or make blanket statements that become an excuse for not taking positive action? Try this:

1. Pinpoint the negative self-talk that sounds most familiar to you.
2. Create a positive mantra to replace it—a brief affirmation that says just the opposite of the negative.
3. Write down that positive thought on a sticky note or on your daily to-do list. Take it with you wherever you go, as a reminder to repeat it to yourself often throughout the day.

Let the power of repetition change your view and the way you respond to the world. Change may take weeks of repetition to become evident—or it could happen immediately. The key: Focus on changing your mind, not on the final result you want.

Substitute sayings Examples of negative thoughts and positive alternatives:

"I can't do it." I am capable; I can do it.
"It will always be this way" Everything changes; this too will pass.
"I'm too afraid " I will stand tall and rise above my fears.
"I'm confused." I'm very clear about what I should do.
"Nobody likes me." Today I will bring joy to someone's life.
"I'm incompetent." There are many things I do well; I will build on my strengths.
"I'm trapped." There is a door to freedom, and it will be revealed to me.
"I'm too old." I'm only as old as I choose to believe.
"I just don't have the energy." The energy will come to me in the doing.
"I can't possibly reach this goal." I can reach my goal, 1 small step at a time.
"I'm not worth it." I am a precious human being and I deserve the best.
"I can't change." I am flexible.
"I don't care." This really means the world to me.
"It's just my fate." I can determine my own future.
"I don't have time for it." I don't have time for other, less important things.
"This will be a lousy day." Good things will come out of today.
"I will never find the answer." The solution will be revealed to me in unexpected ways.
"I can't rise above this temptation." I can do without it, 1 day (or hour or minute) at a time.

